



## Scholarly Publishing – A Time for Change

The Kalmanovitz Library and the Center for Knowledge Management  
University of California, San Francisco

An alarming trend is growing in the scientific publishing industry: subscription costs and annual price increases are rising much more rapidly than library collections budgets can keep up with. The production of scientific information is growing exponentially, yet for years libraries have been forced to reduce their journal and monograph collections to stay within budget. Scholars are at risk of losing access to more scholarly output every year if this development continues.

Several factors are contributing to what many in the scholarly community consider a crisis:

1. The annual rate of inflation (In 10 years, health sciences journal prices have risen 170%; the Consumer Price Index averaged 2.4% over the past 5 years)
2. A growing demand for online journals and other electronic resources
3. Subscription costs for duplicate formats (both print and online)
4. Recurring annual costs for digital content such as books and journal backfiles
5. State budget cuts

### Sticker Shock: The Price of Library Resources

Below are a few examples of information resources the Library invests in to support the research needs of the UCSF community. The prices are compared to goods and services outside of the Library.

#### Library resource and 2004 price

*Science* online = \$11,000 (up from 2003 price of \$4,150)

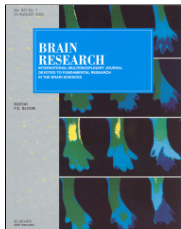


#### Compares to:

One carat Tiffany diamond ring



*Brain Research* (online) = \$21,269



2004 Toyota Camry XLE



MD Consult = \$41,600



One year undergraduate education at Stanford University (tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and personal expenses)



## New Models in Scientific Publishing

Several alternatives to traditional publishing have emerged within the past several years, bringing high quality research to a wider audience at a more reasonable cost.

- **BioMed Central** – <http://www.biomedcentral.com> - Free access to peer-reviewed biomedical research journals. UC faculty can submit articles to BMC journals at no cost through the University's membership.
- **PubMed Central** – <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov> - The National Library of Medicine's digital archive of life sciences journal literature. Access to PMC is free and unrestricted.
- **Public Library of Science** – <http://www.publiclibraryofscience.org> - A nonprofit organization of scientists and physicians committed to providing immediate, free access to peer-reviewed biomedical research.
- **eScholarship** – <http://escholarship.cdlib.org> - Hosted by the University of California, eScholarship provides an open-access repository of scholarly papers, as well as electronic editions of book-length academic works.

## How Scholars Can Help

Researchers and scholars can help regain control of scholarly content from profit-driven publishers by supporting these new publishing models and following these recommended strategies:

- Encourage discussion of scholarly communication issues and proposals for change in your department or research unit.
- Where possible, publish in open-access journals. Serve on editorial boards or review manuscripts for open-access journals (see <http://www.doaj.org>).
- Include electronic publications in promotion and funding discussions.
- Encourage your society to explore alternatives to contracting or selling its publications to a commercial publisher, and to maintain reasonable prices and user-friendly access terms
- Modify, if appropriate, any contract you sign with a publisher ensuring your right to use your work, including posting on a public archive or an institutional repository such as eScholarship.
- Consider using your influence by refusing to review for expensive journals; by declining to serve on editorial boards of such publications; and by encouraging colleagues to do the same.

If you are a journal editor:

- Use your influence, and that of your editorial board, to lobby for reasonable prices and access policies
- If warranted, consider moving your journal to a non-commercial publisher or creating an alternative journal.

For more ideas, see <http://www.createchange.org/home.html>

## For More Information

For more about scholarly publishing issues affecting UCSF, see <http://www.library.ucsf.edu/collres/scipub>

## Questions?

Contact Julia Kochi ([julia.kochi@library.ucsf.edu](mailto:julia.kochi@library.ucsf.edu)) or Anneliese Taylor ([anneliese.taylor@library.ucsf.edu](mailto:anneliese.taylor@library.ucsf.edu)).

## OPEN ACCESS & ALTERNATE PUBLISHING MODELS: Notes

*After we were seated, round-the-table introductions revealed that we were made up of the advocates, the curious, and a rep from The New England Journal of Medicine eager to give us his point of view (he emphasized that he was speaking for himself, not for the journal which he represents). I took notes while we all ate, so there is perhaps less continuity to the portrayal of our discussion than I would best like.*

NEJM rep, to the table: what are you hoping for?

Answers generally: lower prices [for journals] and freer access

Members of the group requested that the NEJM rep present his point of view:

Direct query to him: is there the possibility of offering an author an option to pay a fee which would allow open access to his/her published material?

NEJM rep answer: no, not really, qualified by reasoning: journals attempt to control copyright for the good of the author and the users, ie, attempt to guard published material from misuse (eg, meaning of work misrepresented, translations misdones, quotation for profit in ads, all such uses monitored and controlled) in a manner the rep feels would be beyond the resources of an author

Direct query: could not an “open access group” standing in lieu of a publisher do the same? Yes, but problem remains that *someone* must; open access can leave material open to misuse, and authors do not have time/resources to do so themselves

Rep’s greater point: real problem in journal publishing venues today is that there are too few publishers and a consequent lack of competition

Rep/table’s question at large: who funds open access (there must be funding from somewhere???)?

Start up funds for some well known open access operations have come from grants; continuing funding might come from authors themselves, or from government funding, or from ???

Comment (from rep?): authors cannot afford to support such an open access operation on their own

Comments from table:

Grant requests could be written with publishing costs included as part of expenses to be covered by grant funding; some grantors are already providing such funding

*At about this point, the discussion began to move in a more general fashion, not so much centered on the NEJM rep’s requested point of view.*

A problem with persuading authors to publish in open access venues: reviewers of tenure applications are accustomed to judging applicant’s publications by where as much (if not more than) as by what; it can be sufficient to have published in NEJM. Open access publishing compels reviewers of applications to actually look at the “what” of publication, perhaps not something nervous applicants are comfortable doing.

Some larger institutions have been at least partially successful in negotiations with large publishing houses for lower prices: the UC system (or perhaps just UCSF?) was successful in obtaining some concessions from Elsevier; positive (from the UC perspective) aspects were: strong faculty support and the “eyes of the world” on the negotiations; both sides found it necessary to make concessions in the end.

Has anyone discussed the problem with faculty (or faculty equivalent = primary clientele?) Yes, Kaiser Permanente libraries have done so.

Major problem in how libraries are presented with journals for purchasing:  
Bundling (ie, in order to buy a wanted title, must buy it in a group purchase with other, less-desired or not-at-all-desired titles)  
Must purchase with online access (or vice versa, must purchase print to obtain online access, etc)

NEJM rep queried, didn't it seem that publishers ought to be concerned that many among their chief customers were *so* unhappy?  
Well, yes .....

NEJM rep believes there must be a change: "seminal moment" in marketing of medical information/publishing  
Librarians in a pressured place: higher costs/lower budgets  
Purchases of European journals hampered by loss of dollar vs Eurodollar

Discussion of the new budget model for the *New England Journal of Medicine*  
Not the library but the institution pays for the site license for the entire institution  
Table members pointed out that many smaller libraries cannot afford the higher fee occasioned by the change-over and have no parent institution to pay the fee for them

Return to discussion of too few publishers in the medical publishing field  
Point made: true assessment of the situation, but libraries have no power to change that situation and the present government does not seem inclined to enforce trust laws, etc  
Libraries can only create other venues for the access and distribution of medical information, hence such endeavors as open access

Discussion ended with lunch.

Present:

Ysabel Bertolucci	Joan Fierberg
Laura Brown	Lynn Flance
David Brown (recorder)	Gail Persily (moderator)
Vicki Croft	Mary Riodan
Mark Danderson (guest/NEJM rep)	Carla Smith

(Submitted by D Brown, 02/09/2004)